

April 1, 2023

Patricia (Patty) Veerkamp

Dear Honorable Judge Barrett,

I am Patty Veerkamp, Nicholas's birth Mother. I am currently married to Nick's Father, Donald P. Veerkamp, although we are going through a divorce at this time. I have been an Art Director, Customer Service Representative, Art Teacher and Credit Union Teller. I was a room mom and helped start the Art program at Nick's grade school. I was their first Art Teacher when Nick was in third grade.

I am writing to tell you about my son and ask you to consider his good character before giving him his sentence. I know that you must use a mandatory sentence guideline. I wish that were not the case. I hope the laws change soon.

We are a Catholic family and have a very successful chicken dinner at our parish. Nick volunteered at the dinner as a cub scout and continued to work with his Dad there for many years. I am proud of him for all his accomplishments.

Nick has mostly been a happy and caring person and helps others whenever he is asked or, when he just knows they need help. He is a hard worker and wants to succeed in life and at being a "good man". (his words)

Nick started working at the age of sixteen at Showcase Cinema in order to pay for his gas. He moved up from usher to the food service area, while there. After he graduated he got a job at Papa John's delivering pizza.

During highschool he discovered he had social anxiety. We tried to find a medication that worked for him but he did not like the effects they had on him. He never liked to take much medicine. He went to talk to a Dr. Rick Reckman whom he liked a lot.

Nick is a very smart person. He is able to remember many things about animals and science topics. He met his best friend Brennan at LaSalle where they enjoyed talking about all the things above.

Brennan has had a hard home life. His parents were divorced and his Mother remarried. He looked after his younger siblings while his Mom worked. A few years ago his step -Father died, he broke up with his girlfriend and wrecked his car. I'm not sure of the order of that. For whatever reason he started using heroin.

I knew that Nick was helping Brennan by driving him to and from work. He also took him to a place where he had some drug rehab. I drove him there once too. Sometimes Nick would tell me he was going to stay at Brennan's and go to work from there. Nick was driving Brennan to work and picking him up and driving him home, way out to Aurora, IN. He even picked Brennan up when he wasn't working himself.

Our family has endured several heartaches since Nick has been in jail for the past three years. Nick's Grandfather, Donald G. Veerkamp passed away last year from COPD. His Grandmother, Don's wife, has been in the hospital three or more times, due to her heart. His Father, Don, had a major stroke last

November in Reading, PA which caused left side paralysis. He was brought home and then decided he wanted a divorce and was going to live at his Mom's. He has been living at his Mother's condo since then. He partially recuperated but will no longer be able to work. We are in the middle of a divorce and selling our family home. I am packing now.

I hope that wherever he goes from here, he can be happy. I want him to be able to be safe and learn. I have faith that he will make an important contribution to the world in whatever he does and becomes. Thank you for considering my request for minimum sentencing. I only wish you had more freedom to make it less.

Sincerely,

Patty Veerkamp